

Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, December 22, 1791, Report on Negotiations with Spain, from the Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

REPORT ON NEGOTIATION WITH SPAIN¹

¹ From *Senate Executive Journal*, I., 95.

[Dec. 22, 1791.]

The Secretary of State reports to the President of the United States, that one of the Commissioners of Spain, in the name of both, has lately communicated to him, verbally, by order of his Court, that his Catholic Majesty, apprized of your solicitude to have some arrangements made respecting our free navigation of the river Mississippi, and the use of a port thereon, is ready to enter into a treaty thereon at Madrid.

The Secretary of State is of opinion, that this overture should be attended to without delay, and that the proposal of treating at Madrid, though not what might have been desired, should yet be accepted, and a commission plenipotentiary made out for the purpose.

That Mr. Carmichael, the present Chargé des Affaires of the United States at Madrid, from the local acquaintance which he must have acquired with persons and circumstances, would be an useful and proper member of the commission: but that it would be useful, also, to join with him some person more particularly acquainted with the circumstances of the navigation to be treated of.

Library of Congress

That the fund appropriated by the act providing the means of intercourse between the United States and foreign nations, will in-

-sufficiently furnish the ordinary and regular demands on it, and is, consequently, inadequate to the mission of an additional Commissioner express from hence.

That, therefore, it will be advisable, on this account, as well as for the sake of despatch, to constitute some one of the Ministers of the United States in Europe, jointly with Mr. Carmichael, Commissioners Plenipotentiary, for the special purpose of negotiating and concluding with any person or persons duly authorized by his Catholic Majesty, a convention or treaty for the free navigation of the river Mississippi by the citizens of the United States, under such accommodations with respect to a port, and other circumstances, as may render the said navigation practicable, useful, and free from dispute: saving to the President and Senate their respective rights as to the ratification of the same; and that the said negotiation be at Madrid, or such other place in Spain as shall be desired by his Catholic Majesty.